

STAMPS IN CARDIOLOGY

William Harvey (1578-1657)

The first in an occasional series prepared by M K Davies and A Hollman

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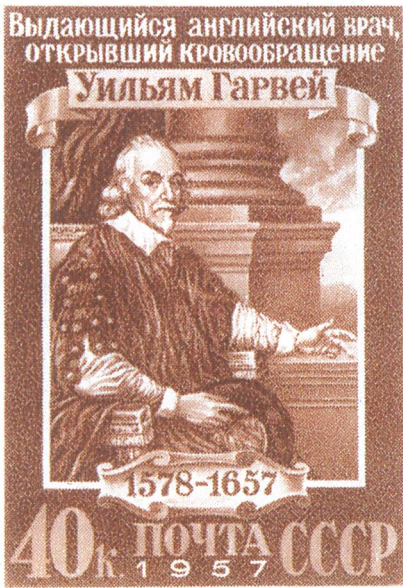
Russia issued stamps in 1957 (A) and in 1978 (B) to commemorate the 300th and the 400th anniversaries of William Harvey's birth and death. The Argentine stamp (C) from 1959 was part of a set issued on the occasion of the 21st International Physiological Congress. The Grenada 1973 stamp (D) was part of the issue commemorating the 25th anniversary of the World Health Organisation founded in 1948. Harvey appeared on the stamps of the Transkei (E) as part of the Heroes in Medicine series from 1982. The last and most recent stamp was issued by Hungary (F) in 1987 as part of a set featuring famous doctors. The British Post Office rejected a request for a Harvey stamp in 1977, and has never produced one. However, some postal covers featuring Folkestone Parish Church were issued in 1986 to raise funds to restore the Harvey Memorial Window erected in 1874.

William Harvey was born in Folkestone, Kent. Having attended Gonville and Caius College Cambridge he continued his medical training at Padua, then the best medical school in Europe, where his teacher was the celebrated anatomist Hieronymus Fabricius ab Aquapendente. At that time it was thought that blood ebbed and flowed in the body and went through invisible pores in the septum to the left ventricle where it mixed with air from the lungs. It was at Padua that he first recog-

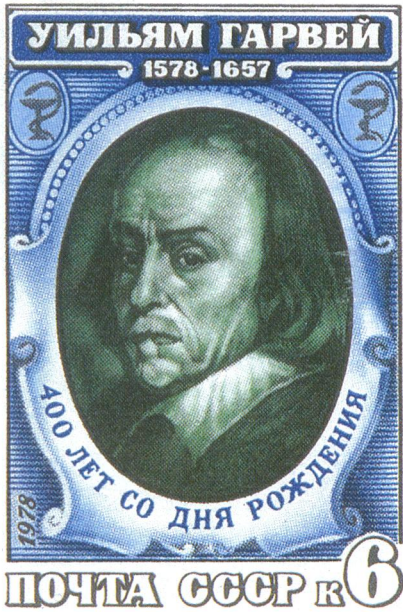
nised the problems posed by the function of the heart, and where Fabricius had been the first to describe the valves in the veins. After returning to England in 1604 he became a physician at St Bartholomew's Hospital, but he spent much of his time in scientific research on the cardiovascular system. By means of accurate experiments and dissections in animals and in man, he demonstrated the pulmonary circulation and showed that blood must pass from the arteries to the veins, even though the capillaries were then unknown. He was the first to try to quantify the cardiac output and blood volume. This work led to his great discovery of the circulation of the blood, and the pumping action of the heart, and in 1628 he published his immortal book *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et circulatione sanguinis in animalibus*.

He was a prominent Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London where he lectured for many years and to which he donated a new college building with a library containing his own books. The College reveres his memory with their annual Harveian Oration and Feast. Harvey's scientific genius for which he will always be remembered was his pioneer use of the experimental method coupled with brilliantly simple and convincing reasoning. He has been termed the father of physiology and he was certainly also the father of clinical science.

A



B



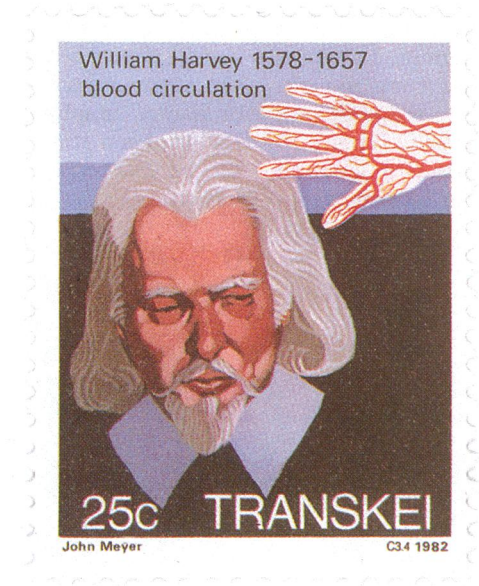
C



D



E



F

